

The Republicans do not talk about that. Not only does the Republican leadership want to privatize and just give money to insurance companies, but they do not suggest in any way that they are going to try to bring down the cost. Why in the world would private insurance companies just not try to pass on all the costs and all the money that the prescription drug companies make and simply pass it on to seniors? We have to have some pricing mechanism, and that is what we are demanding.

The Republicans need to bring up the bill. Bring up a bill that is comprehensive coverage under Medicare and that has some kind of pricing mechanism.

MAKING PERMANENT MARRIAGE TAX RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I just want to kind of just make a comment. I find it is always interesting that my Democratic friends advocate permanent increases in spending and they are always first in line to advocate permanent increases in taxes, but they will fight tooth and nail any permanent tax cut. That is what I would like to talk about today, and that is, the fact that just a little over a year ago today President Bush signed into law a tax cut, a tax cut unfortunately because of congressional rules that had to be a temporary measure; but this was a tax cut which provided across-the-board tax relief for every American.

When President Bush became President, he inherited a weak economy; and he said if we could put a little bit of money back into the pocketbooks of working families, they will have some extra money to meet their needs back home; and, frankly, that money in the private sector will get our economy moving again, and of course, economists told us that since that bill was signed into law in June that by Labor Day of last year the economy was on the rebound. Unfortunately, the consequence of a terrorist attack just a new days later, as we know, shocked the confidence of consumers and investors; and of course, we are working to get our economy moving again.

As we work on getting our economy moving again, we also recognize that permanency in the Tax Code affects decision-making; and that is why last week we passed legislation to make permanent the elimination of the death tax, which will benefit family farmers and small businesses who are making long-term investment decisions knowing the tax consequences. That is good for the economy.

Today, I want to talk about legislation that we are going to be bringing before the House later this week, and

this is legislation to make permanent the marriage tax relief that was in the Bush tax cut that we enacted 1 year ago.

Like many of my colleagues, I have come to the floor over the last several years asking a very fundamental question, that is, Is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code married working couples paid higher taxes than two single people who chose to live together? Is it right, is it fair that 43 million married working couples paid on average about \$1,700 more in higher taxes just because they are married? Is it right, is it fair that our Tax Code, prior to this past year, punished society's most basic institution with higher taxes?

I am proud to say that thanks to the leadership of House Republicans, under the leadership of Speaker HASTERT, we fought time and time again to eliminate the marriage tax penalty; and while we suffered vetoes under President Clinton, we are proud to say that under President Bush the marriage tax penalty was eliminated. We helped married couples in a number of ways, three ways as a matter of fact.

First, we doubled the standard deduction that is used by families who do not itemize their taxes. Almost 9 million married working couples do not itemize their taxes. So they use the standard deduction, and we doubled the standard deduction to be twice that for singles, eliminating their marriage penalty.

For those who itemize, such as those who give to their institution of faith, their church, their charity, synagogue or temple or mosque, we recognize that most married couples itemize their taxes if they own a home, for example, and we helped those by widening the 15 percent tax break so they could earn twice as much as a married couple as a single person and stay in the 15 percent tax bracket. We eliminate their marriage tax penalty.

Third, for low-income families who utilize and are helped by the earned income credit, we eliminate their marriage tax penalty as well. So we help low-income working middle-class married couples who have suffered the marriage tax penalty.

Let me give my colleagues an example of a married couple from Joliet, Illinois, in the district I represent in the south suburbs of Chicago. Jose and Magdalena Castillo, they are laborers. They have a combined income of \$82,000. That is their combined income. Their children are Eduardo and Carolina. They are happy people. They work hard, great American citizens, enjoying life in the south suburbs of Chicago; but they suffered the marriage tax penalty because they chose to get married, and we believe the Tax Code should be marriage neutral.

Prior to the Bush tax cut being signed into law, Jose and Magdalena Castillo paid about \$1,150 more in higher taxes just because they were married. If they chose to get divorced and

live together, they would have saved \$1,150 a year. Jose and Magdalena Castillo were helped by the Bush tax cut, which originated right here in the House of Representatives; and I am proud to say that that was signed into law last year, and for the next few years, the marriage tax penalty for the Castillo family will be eliminated.

If this Congress does nothing, it will be made permanent, and I believe we need to help married working couples; and this week, on Thursday, we are going to be voting to make permanent the marriage tax penalty relief in the Bush tax cut, and my hope is that we will have bipartisan support, that even our Democratic friends will join with us, in making marriage tax penalty relief permanent to help couples like Jose and Magdalena Castillo of Joliet, Illinois.

LIMITING GROWTH IN GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, like many Americans, I learned last week of the President's intention to create for the first time since the 1970s a Cabinet-level Department of the executive branch; and like most Americans, I support the idea of a Department of Homeland Security, bringing together various and diverse elements of our investigative branches, of our counterterrorism branches and, more importantly, border security, to create a leaner, more efficient means of protecting our citizens than we have under current and, in many ways, antiquated structures in the executive branch.

While I support the reorganization of government, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against big government and the growth in government, Mr. Speaker, that has been the natural antecedent to emergencies and crises throughout American history.

The Bible tells us that there is nothing new under the sun; what has been before will be again, in the book of "Ecclesiastes." And as I see these events unfold and I see our President beginning to call for the largest potential expansion in the executive branch in my lifetime, I cannot help but feel that what has been before is about to come again if we, who believe in limited government and personal responsibility, do not exercise the franchise of our vote and our conviction in this institution.

The idea that the unrestrained growth of government is a natural antecedent to emergencies was, to be perfectly honest, first posited in a book titled "Crisis and Leviathan," by a little-known professor named Robert Higgs, 1987, first published. Very simple thesis in this book. Professor Higgs argues that the growth of the Federal